

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

030657Z Apr 06

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ALMATY 001161

SIPDIS

STATE FOR CA/VO/CI (CLAMORA AND MDERKS)
STATE ALSO FOR CA/OCS/ACS (CTADROS), SCA/CEN (JMUDGE)
FRANKFURT FOR RCO RUSSEL BROWN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KOCI](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [CVIS](#) [KPAO](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: SPRING THAW BRINGS CONSULAR OUTREACH

REF: A.) ALMATY 939, B.) ALMATY 938, C.) ALMATY 4407

1.) SUMMARY. In the previous two weeks, ConOffs have visited four cities in Kazakhstan to provide American Citizen Services (ACS) and to meet with students and local adoption officials. Embassy Almaty's "Mobile Consular Section" endeavors to provide critical services to the roughly 5,000 American citizens spread across the world's ninth largest country. END SUMMARY.

Stepping up to Central Kazakhstan: Astana and Karaganda

2.) On March 6th, ConOff met with students in the central Kazakhstani city of Karaganda. The lecture, at the English-language only Friendship School centered on higher education opportunities in the U.S. and student visa application procedures. The visit to Karaganda also served to satisfy two Welfare/Whereabouts requests (Refs: A,B).

3.) On March 7 Ambassador Ordway conducted a Town Hall meeting in Astana. After the Ambassador's introductory remarks, including a review of the pace of construction of the new embassy complex, and a spirited question and answer session, ConOff provided services such as extra visa pages, and certified copies of passports and notariats. This was the second annual Town Hall meeting to be held at Embassy Branch Office Astana.

Caspian Sea Region: Atyrau and Aktau

4.) In an effort to reach the second largest concentration of Americans resident in Kazakhstan, ConOff visited the Caspian Sea region on March 15th and 16th. The city of Atyrau is situated about half an hour north of the Caspian Sea and is split by the Ural River, which represents the continental divide between Europe and Asia. It was founded in 1645 by a Russian trader and is 350 kilometers east of the Russian city Astrakhan. Despite its closeness to the Russian border, the majority of the 145,000 residents are ethnically Kazakh. Atyrau is also the major jumping-off point for the Tengiz oil fields. The Atyrau region has the largest population of registered Americans outside of Almaty.

5.) A representative of the TengizChevroil company provided ConOff with a tour of the "American village" in Atyrau where most of the expatriate employees live. The village includes housing for expatriate workers, a grade school, and a recreational facility, including a cafeteria.

Atyrau Amcits: "Open a Consulate Here!"

6.) Later, ConOff met with a group of about 50 students and teachers from Atyrau State University. Questions from the students focused on higher education in the U.S., visa procedures, teen life in the United States, financial assistance, the Work and Travel program and teacher exchange programs. In a meeting with the Rector of Atyrau State University, ConOff was informed that they have an exchange program with the University of Washington in Seattle.

7.) ConOff also hosted a Town Hall meeting for the Americans living and working in Atyrau. The Town Hall broke post records for services requested, specifically extra pages and certified copies. Given the large number of attendees and the continued interest and support of the local business community, ConOffs plan to visit the region on a quarterly basis starting in the second half of FY-2006. ConOff also fielded a number of requests that the embassy open a permanent branch office on the Caspian to assist American citizens based there.

Aktau: Meeting with the Deputy Mayor and Students

8.) Aktau sits on the site of an ancient Silk Road port city, directly on the banks of the Caspian Sea. During Soviet times, it served as uranium storage and nuclear weapons development site, as well as, paradoxically, a beach and vacation destination. Today, it is positioning itself to become the Houston of Kazakhstan. It has a slightly larger population than Atyrau although a much smaller concentration of registered Americans.

9.) ConOff met with local officials to discuss inter-country adoption issues. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Akim (Deputy Mayor) of the Aktau region and was attended by the Deputy Director of the local Department of Education, representatives from local orphanages, the Family and Children's Issues Committee, and the Prosecutor's office. Questions during this meeting echoed those in similar settings, such as the tax benefits of adopting, if there is a federal body responsible for international adoptions and a discussion of the Post Placement Reporting requirement. Particularly striking were questions that focused on clarifications of Kazakhstan's own laws and procedures.

10.) ConOff also visited Aktau State University to discuss with students and faculty opportunities to work and study in the United States. While questions mirrored those asked in Atyrau, students in Aktau were more interested in practical matters such as dispelling rumors about the visa interview process and how exactly to find a university in the United States. The trip was capped by the first ever Town Hall meeting for Americans resident in Aktau.

ORDWAY